UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.121/38
28 March 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH/
RUSSIAN

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE-KEEPING
OPERATIONS

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

Report of the Secretary-General

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* Reply submitted on behalf of the Twelve member States of the European Community.

** Reply submitted on behalf of the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

READEX FICHE

INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, at its forty-fifth session, adopted resolution 45/75 of 11 December 1990 entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects". In paragraph 28 of this resolution the General Assembly invited Member States to submit any further observations and suggestions to the Secretary-General by 1 March 1991 on peace-keeping operations, outlining proposals on specific items in order to allow for more detailed consideration of the Special Committee, with particular emphasis on practical proposals to make these operations more effective. In paragraph 29 it requested the Secretary-General to prepare, within existing resources, a compilation of the above-mentioned observations and suggestions and to submit it to the Special Committee by 30 March 1991.

2. Pursuant to that invitation, the Secretary-General on 14 February 1991 addressed a note to the Governments of Member States transmitting the text of the resolution and drawing attention to the invitation contained therein.

3. The replies received from Member States as at 28 March 1991 are given below. Any further replies will be issued as addenda to the present document.

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

AUSTRIA

[Original: English]

[20 March 1991]

1. Austria has already repeatedly submitted observations and suggestions on peace-keeping operations in all their aspects, with particular emphasis on practical proposals to make these operations more effective. Reference is made in this connection in particular to the views expressed in the statement of the Austrian representative in the Special Political Committee during the debate on this agenda item (A/SPC/45/SR.19 of 21 November 1990) which remains valid.

2. One important element for the capacity of the United Nations to react quickly to the need for a United Nations military presence is the timely availability of personnel. Austria has therefore decided to increase the availability of stand-by military observers to 50 officers. The formation of an engineer unit and a mobile medical unit, also on a stand-by basis, is currently being planned.

3. Another important area is the establishment of training programmes. Austria therefore intends to enlarge its training programme for military observers, staff officers and military police which is also open to participants from other countries.

4. The Austrian views on other aspects of United Nations peace-keeping operations, including their financing, will be further elaborated on during the forthcoming session of the Special Committee.

BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]

[25 March 1991]

The Byelorussian SSR, as one of the founder Members of the United Nations, is deeply committed to the ideals of peace and freedom enshrined in the Organization's Charter. This principled position was reaffirmed in the Byelorussian SSR Declaration on State Sovereignty, adopted on 27 July 1990 by the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Byelorussian SSR also approaches the question of United Nations peace-keeping operations on this basis.

Peace-keeping operations recently underwent significant qualitative changes, which led to a marked improvement in their effectiveness. In this connection, it seems extremely important to strengthen the most essential aspects of the Organization's work in maintaining peace, both the aspects which came about recently during the transition to a post-confrontational stage in relations as well as those that existed previously.

One of the universal principles underlying the Organization's work, particularly with regard to peace-keeping operations, is the principle of multilateralism, which is beginning to be implemented at a level and with a degree of effectiveness that are in keeping with the Organization's potential. The coordination of efforts within the Security Council, particularly among its five permanent members, is the basis for this principle in the area of peace-making. The unanimity achieved by the permanent members concerning Iraqi aggression and the convergence of views on other complex situations in areas of conflict constitute unique experience in solving very complicated problems. Further improving the mechanism of consultations among the members of the Security Council with the participation of the Secretary-General, and a periodic in-depth review of conflict situations in which United Nations forces are or may be involved, would serve to augment this experience.

The Security Council is in the initial stages of a process of taking decisions on conducting peace-keeping operations. The current distribution of the key elements in this process can be viewed as a specific, established system which has stood the test of time and basically meets existing needs. The taking of a decision by the Security Council with the obligatory consent of the parties to a conflict, in accordance with which the Secretary-General takes corresponding measures and has sufficient freedom of action, is a permanent element of this system. New components taking into account the processes occurring in the world could be added to this framework without detriment to its basic integral parts. Stepping up the work of the Military Staff Committee, which has considerable potential in both the theoretical and practical fields, could be one such component.

New requirements could be considered and dealt with then at the decision-making level. The urgent need to strengthen preventive potential should be taken into account in Security Council decisions aimed at establishing a system for identifying and preventing potential conflicts. In this connection, the Secretary-General could be given broad powers to send fact-finding missions to various parts of the world and set up observer posts.

The most recent peace-keeping operations, of which the United Nations activity in Namibia may be termed the culmination, revealed new dimensions and at the same time embodied all the practical experience of previous operations. The emergence within the structure of the United Nations peace-keeping activities of such elements as monitoring of the conduct of free elections and a more active role for the civilian component of the operations opened up prospects for further development. Along with these well constructed and functionally justified elements, the environmental aspect of operations, assistance in emergency situations and combating illegal narcotics traffic and organized crime are regarded as realistic and extremely timely activities. The expansion of the scale of activity and functions of peace-keeping operations, as well as the increased demands being placed upon them, highlight the issue of using the latest technology in the conduct of the operations, including satellites, airborne photography, radar and night-vision instrumentation.

Newly identified spheres for the application of efforts in the conduct of United Nations peace-keeping operations, as well as new means of giving effect to

these efforts in the very near future, are clearly becoming a reality. However, a gradual approach needs to be taken and reasonable caution exercised in introducing new features into peace-making activity, since the evolution of peace-keeping operations must not outstrip the evolution of the United Nations itself.

In this connection, particular importance attaches to the role of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, the constructive work of which in recent times gives cause for satisfaction. Its efforts to build up a reserve of United Nations armed forces and observers and the organization of accounting of the supply side of the operations are extremely commendable and need to be continued. Bearing in mind the new realities and the new components of the operations, as well as the need for analysis of the existing proposals, the Special Committee should determine priority areas in its work for in-depth study of given problems.

One of these problems is the financing of United Nations peace-keeping operations. In this connection, it would be important to find ways of diversifying financing, and to review existing ideas and approaches, including reducing the burden of expenditure on the party on whose territory the operation is conducted and establishing funds whose activity would be based on various principles.

For its part, the Byelorussian SSR has taken steps to liquidate its debt to the special account for past operations and is complying with its obligations with respect to the financing of current operations. One way of reducing expenditure could be to rationalize the procedure for training staff, drawing on the experience of existing instruction centres or setting up international centres to train staff. On the whole, rationalization of the conduct of operations is an effective means of preventing an excessive increase in expenditure.

The Byelorussian SSR considers that the process of internationalizing peace-keeping operations will have a positive effect on the strengthening of the peace-making potential of the United Nations, and is ready to participate in this activity in an appropriate manner, particularly through the provision of specialists and services.

The experience accumulated and the steady and progressive development of peace-keeping operations give grounds for hope that in the near future this effective means of settling international disputes will be utilized still more rationally by the States Members of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

LUXEMBOURG

[Original: French]

[15 March 1991]

The Twelve reaffirm their strong political and financial support for the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations.

The Twelve wish to recall the views they expressed in the notes verbales on peace-keeping operations addressed to the Secretary-General in 1989 and 1990, which are contained in documents A/AC.121/36 and A/AC.121/37. They consider that those notes remain perfectly valid. They emphasize once again that, although experience has shown that no one can foresee how long peace-keeping operations might be required, they are provisional arrangements and must not be a substitute for the search for a political settlement of a conflict.

Despite the success of peace-keeping operations in the past, the Twelve believe that the capacity of the United Nations to make preparations for, launch and conduct peace-keeping operations should continue to be strengthened and improved. Important work is being done, year after year, by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and by the Special Political Committee. That work should continue. The Twelve would also like to express their appreciation for the reports submitted by the Secretary-General to the Special Committee, which are indispensable contributions to its deliberations.

The Twelve wish to underscore again that it is important for the Committee to focus its efforts this year on achieving practical and tangible results. To that end, it would be useful for the Committee to limit the number of subjects it considers.

The Twelve suggest that the following subjects be considered at the next meeting of the Special Committee:

- The launching of peace-keeping operations, and in particular the following aspects: planning, the decision-making process, financing, the provision of personnel and matériel, etc. The proposals already made by the Secretary-General on these matters should be taken up in this connection. Such an in-depth study might be undertaken with the participation of representatives from the various units of the Secretariat involved;

- Training;

- The role of civilian personnel in peace-keeping operations. When these operations are being prepared, the Secretariat should examine the tasks to be undertaken so as to determine how peace-keeping personnel, whether military or civilian, can be used to best advantage with a view to fulfilling the mandate effectively and bearing in mind the need for cost-effectiveness;

- Supervision of elections by United Nations observers as part of a peace-keeping operation; and

- The question of preventing conflicts by sending observers, troops or civilian personnel.

The Twelve consider that improving co-ordination between the various Secretariat units concerned would make for greater effectiveness in the

organization and conduct of peace-keeping operations. For the same reason, greater attention should be paid to the work of the Senior Planning and Management Group. In that context it would also be desirable to designate a focal point responsible for all contacts with participating States and for keeping States fully informed about peace-keeping operations.

NORWAY

[Original: English]

[14 March 1991]

1. General remarks

The Nordic countries are encouraged by the growing interest in peace-keeping operations among the Member States. We are also confident that the efforts made by the Secretariat during 1990 and 1991 in response to General Assembly resolution 44/49 will improve the ability of the United Nations and its Member States to carry out peace-keeping operations.

In recent years we have noted with satisfaction the increased readiness in different parts of the world to request a United Nations involvement in a variety of situations where the techniques of peace-keeping could be helpful. The demand for the unique services of the United Nations in peace-keeping activities is likely to continue and expand also into the areas of peace-making and peace-building.

Last year the Special Committee discussed numerous ideas and proposals, ranging from concrete measures for the improvement and strengthening of peace-keeping operations to the more general aspects of securing and maintaining peace. This exercise was very useful. As laid down in General Assembly resolution 45/75, the work of the Committee should now be concentrated on a limited number of issues. We wish, for our part, to limit ourselves to two main issues, namely:

- Organization within the Secretariat;

- Training.

We consider it very important to maintain the Special Committee as a forum for ideas and discussions of practical proposals, aiming at improving the capacity and efficiency of the United Nations in peace-keeping. Therefore, in order to ensure an opportunity to elaborate on new ideas and proposals we would like to suggest the inclusion of an agenda item for:

- Other matters.

2. Organization of the Secretariat

The Nordic countries highly appreciate the valuable work done by the United Nations Secretariat in the field of peace-keeping. Their ability to master the expanded responsibilities in carrying out the recent operations has been impressive.

The Secretariat is already now overburdened with day-to-day management. This, together with a possible expansion of activities, will necessarily raise the question whether the prevailing organization of the Secretariat in planning, launching and managing peace-keeping activities is the most effective.

The Nordic countries look forward with keen interest to receiving the report of the Secretary-General requested in General Assembly resolution 45/75. The report will describe the responsibilities, functions and structure of the various Secretariat units dealing with peace-keeping operations, including details regarding overload posts. We are confident that the report will prove to be useful both for the Secretariat and interested Member States.

The Nordic countries favour ideas and proposals which aim at increasing the capacity and efficiency of the Secretariat in the management of peace-keeping. We therefore welcomed the establishment of the Senior Planning and Monitoring Group. Its report will be important for future discussions.

The Nordic countries wish to draw attention to draft resolution A/C.5/45/L.25, approved by the Fifth Committee on 21 December 1991. The resolution requests the Secretary-General to improve coordination between the peace-keeping-related units in the Secretariat in order to enhance the efficiency of peace-keeping operations.

There is, in our view, room for improvement in the following fields:

- In the present system the command structure of the operations involves two separate branches. The chain of command could be streamlined in the Secretariat as well as in the field in order to avoid a partition of responsibilities and to simplify coordination at all levels;

- The problem of separate structures for the military and the civilian peace-keeping personnel in the field could be solved by creating a common structure;

- Administrative routines and rules could be modernized and made less bureaucratic in order to permit more effective handling of different operations.

The capacity of the Secretariat could be increased in the following areas:

- Contingency planning;

- Coordination, preparation and updating of training guidelines, manuals, operating procedures and studies on peace-keeping operations;

- Communication with troop-contributors.

One useful way of meeting these requirements could be to continue the practice of temporarily reinforcing the Secretariat on a secondment basis. Experienced troop-contributing countries might wish to consider making such personnel available.

3. Training

Training is an important part of the preparation of a good peace-keeper, and even more so when we are facing new challenges. The Nordic countries have always been in favour of a more active United Nations role in this area. Some countries, including the Nordic countries themselves, have developed their own training systems, and other nations are considering doing the same. There has, however, been little development towards coordination and exchange of experts. The presentations and discussions carried out in the informal consultations among interested Member States might be a useful step in this direction.

The Nordic countries welcome the training guidelines recently received from the Secretariat. The guidelines represent a valuable step to develp a United Nations policy in this area.

We also recommend that the United Nations collect information from its Member States and relevant organizations about peace-keeping training and issue a "United Nations training catalogue". The catalogue should include a survey of all available training courses as well as information regarding possibilities for participation. Member States might wish to consider what types of training could be made available to participants from other countries. We support any attempt to improve coordination and exchange of experiences in this field.

The Nordic countries recommend that the Committee consider how training could be institutionalized. Peace-keeping has become much more multidimensional. For instance, the number of civilians has increased. Peace-keeping operations will be more comprehensive also covering areas not previously dealt with. A stronger United Nations involvement is necessary. The Organization should play both a coordinating and supervising role, and provide guidelines for all training needs. We welcome General Assembly resolution 45/219, requesting the Secretary-General to carry out a study on a possible use of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and its facilities for education and training of peace-keepers.

Training could be organized by United Nations Headquarters and on the regional or national level:

(a) United Nations Headquarters

Training at the United Nations could be organized within or under the supervision of the Secretariat itself, or by one of the United Nations institutions like UNITAR. The International Peace Academy and similar institutions could also be helpful in this respect.

Training on this level could aim at the following categories of personnel:

- United Nations staff and personnel working both with policy and day-to-day management and administration of peace-keeping activities;

- Leaders of regional and national training institutions;

- Representatives from international institutes and organizations;

- Policy-makers from Governments;

- Force commanders and other key personnel in peace-keeping missions.

(b) Regional level

On the regional level Member States might find it useful to organize training with their neighbouring countries in accordance with United Nations guidelines. Training on this level could include the following categories of personnel:

- Instructors and teachers;

- Civilians and military staff personnel;

- Military obervers;

- Other specialists (logistical and military police personnel, election supervisors, civilian police).

(c) National level

Training on the national level, which could be organized in accordance with United Nations guidelines, is usually conducted in the Member State's own language. The training might include the following categories of personnel:

- Troops;

- Civilian personnel;

- Administrators;

- As appropriate, some of the categories mentioned above in section (b).

4. Other matters

Peace-keeping activities have, as already mentioned, both diversified and increased in number. The United Nations has been able to apply a pragmatic and flexible approach to the variety of demands for peace-keeping services. Consequently, a compilation of the practices used and experiences gained in peace-keeping operations which have been concluded would in our view serve as useful sources of information for future activities.

The Nordic countries have repeatedly suggested that the role which the United Nations could play in preventing potential conflicts should be more thoroughly examined. In this respect, we fully concur with the Secretary-General's view in his report (A/45/1) underlining the need to increase the preventive and peace-making capacity of the United Nations.

Such a capacity would enable the Secretary-General to monitor potential conflict situations and identify points of danger at an early stage. Preventive and anticipatory diplomacy could include fact-finding missions, special observer missions and military forces serving in preventive operations. In this context the Nordic countries also wish to refer to the recent work of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations, and especially its "Draft Declaration on Fact-Finding by the United Nations in the Field of the Maintenance of International Peace and Security" (A/AC.182/L.70), which could serve as a source of ideas for the Committee's discussions.